Amendments to the Specification:

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~~CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS~~CROSS-REFERENCE TO

RELATED APPLICATIONS

The present invention is related to co-pending U.S. Patent Application Serial No.

09/625,824, issued on October 21, 2003 as U.S. Patent No. 6,636,259 entitled "Automatically

Configuring A Web-Enabled Digital Camera To Access The Internet,"; and to co-pending U.S.

Patent Application Serial No. 09/626,418 entitled "Method And System For Selecting Actions

To Be Taken By A Server When Uploading Images," which are assigned to the assignee of the

present application and filed on the same date as the present application.

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~~FIELD OF THE INVENTION~~STATEMENT REGARDING FEDERALLY SPONSORED

RESEARCH OR DEVELOPMENT

Not Applicable

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

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~~BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION~~DESCRIPTION OF RELATED ART INCLUDING
INFORMATION DISCLOSED UNDER 37 CFR 1.97 and 1.98

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As the popularity of digital cameras grows, the desire of digital camera users to share their images with others will also continue to grow. New digital camera owners typically try to share their images based on the paradigm of film cameras, in which images are printed on paper and then placed into a photo album. The most straightforward approach to do this with a digital camera is to connect the digital camera directly to a printer to create the prints, and then manually insert the images into a photo album. Users often find this process somewhat complicated and restrictive because standard printers can only print images in limited sizes and ~~requires~~ require particular types of paper. And even after the photo album has been assembled, the printed images are not easily shared with many people.

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~~SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION~~ BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

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~~BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS~~ BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE SEVERAL VIEWS OF THE DRAWINGS

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~~DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION~~ DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

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An example of a single entity 12 includes an insurance company that contracts with the photo-sharing service 16 to have all digital cameras 14 used by their agents to transmit their

images to a customized insurance photo-sharing website. Examples of a hierarchal relationships of entities 12 includes a camera manufacturer, such as ~~Nikon~~NIKON, that contracts with the photo-sharing service 16 to have all ~~Nikon~~NIKON digital cameras 14 transmit their images to the customized ~~Nikon~~NIKON photo-sharing website. Since the images of different users must be distinguished, each user of a ~~Nikon~~NIKON camera 14 would also constitute an entity within the ~~Nikon~~NIKON website so that the images from different users can be distinguished. Other examples of hierarchal entity relationships include a retailer and its consumers, a real estate agency and its agents, community groups and its members, and government agencies and its employees, for instance.

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The cameras 14 may be provided with wireless connectivity using anyone of a variety of methods. For example, a cellphone may be used to provide the digital camera 14 with wireless capability, where the camera 14 is connected to the cellphone via a cable or some short-range wireless communication, such as ~~Bluetooth~~BLUETOOTH. Alternatively, the camera 14 could be provided with built-in cellphone-like wireless communication. In an alternative embodiment, the digital camera 14 is not wireless, but instead uses a modem for Internet connectivity. The modem could be external or internal. If external, the camera 14 could be coupled to modem via any of several communications means (e.g., USB, IEEE1394, infrared link, etc.). An internal modem could be implemented directly within the electronics of camera 14 (e.g., via a modem ASIC), or alternatively, as a software only modem executing on a processor within camera. As such, it should be appreciated that, at the hardware connectivity level, the Internet connection can

take several forms. Hence, it should be appreciated that the present invention is not limited to any particular method of accessing the Internet.

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As an example of the operation of the photo sharing system 10, consider the following scenario. Assume that camera manufacturers ~~Minolta~~MINOLTA and ~~Nikon~~NIKON are entities 12 that have contracted with the photo-sharing service 16, and that the photo-sharing service 16 hosts a photo-sharing website 22 for ~~Minolta~~MINOLTA and a photo-sharing website 22 ~~Nikon~~NIKON. The ~~Minolta~~MINOLTA cameras 14 would be provided the entity ID 28 for ~~Minolta~~MINOLTA and the ~~Nikon~~NIKON cameras 14 would be provided the entity ID 28 for ~~Nikon~~NIKON. When the ~~Minolta~~MINOLTA and the ~~Nikon~~NIKON cameras 14 send sets of images to the photo-sharing service 16, the gateway server 18 would distinguish the cameras 14 by the entity IDs 28 and would direct the set of images received from ~~Minolta~~MINOLTA cameras 14 to ~~Minolta~~MINOLTA's photo-sharing website, and would direct the images from ~~Nikon~~NIKON cameras 14 to ~~Nikon~~NIKON's photo-sharing website. To view the images, the owners of the cameras 14 would use a browser 24 on their PC or PDA to visit the URL of the ~~Minolta~~MINOLTA or ~~Nikon~~NIKON photo-sharing websites 22. In one preferred embodiment, the photo-sharing service 16 sends the URL of the entity-specific website 22 directly to the camera 14 for display to inform the user of the address.

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Referring now to FIG. 3, a diagram showing the preferred embodiment of the connectivity and application software of the camera 14 and the entity ID 28 information is

shown. Preferably, the camera 14 includes a microprocessor-based architecture that runs an operating system 70 for controlling camera hardware 72 and overall functionality of the camera 14 (e.g., taking pictures, storing pictures, and the like). An example of such an operating system 70 is the ~~Digita~~DIGITA™ Operating Environment developed by the assignee of the present application. The camera 14 also includes communication manager 74 software, and a TCP-IP protocol stack 76, that enables communication via the internet, as is well-known in the art. The entity ID information 28 and captured images may be stored in one or more types of memories 82.

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In a preferred embodiment, the entity-specific websites 22 are not created from scratch, but are created by modifying a preexisting template. The template may include several different sections, such as A, B, C and D, for instance. Assuming for example that the template used to create a website for ~~Nikon~~NIKON, and section A is used to specify the name of the entity then the name ~~Nikon~~NIKON would be inserted into that section. Other entity-specific content would be used to fill out the remaining sections. The Web pages comprising the ~~Nikon~~NIKON specific photo-sharing website would then be provided with URL's unique to that website. The entity's regular website would be modified to include a link to the entity's photo-sharing website 22. In addition, the entity-specific photo-sharing website would include a link back to the entity's website. Entities 12 may have entity photo-sharing websites 22 created for them in one of two ways; automatically by logging into the photo-sharing service 16 and manually customizing the templates, or by having the entity photo-sharing website created for them.

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In response, the camera displays a confirmation dialog screen on the camera and prompts the user to record an audio annotation for the images or to continue in step 108. The user may then choose to record audio for the images in step 110. After choosing to continue, or after recording audio, the camera displays a "connecting" dialog screen in step 112 to indicate to the user that the camera is establishing an Internet connection. At the same time, the camera checks for available connection options in step 114, and if more than one is found, the camera prompts the user to select one of the connection options. For example, the camera may be within range of a ~~Bluetooth~~BLUETOOTH (short range or wireless)-equipped printer and a cellphone, so the user will be prompted to choose which device the camera should establish communication with.

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<center>~~CLAIMS~~CLAIMS</center>

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~~ABSTRACT~~ABSTRACT

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~~A system and method for hosting entity-specific photo-sharing websites for entity-specific image capture devices is disclosed.~~ The system and method provide <u>hosting entity-specific photo-sharing websites for entity-specific image capture devices by providing</u> software for the entity-specific image capture devices that causes the image capture devices to transmit entity ID information when the image capture devices transmit images over the Internet. The

system and method further provide an online photo-sharing service capable of hosting the entity-specific photo-sharing websites for each of the entities, such that when the image capture devices connect to photo-sharing service, the photo-sharing service uses the entity ID received from the image capture devices to automatically associate the image with the photo-sharing website of the identified entity.